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NOTE TO ART. V. NO. CCIII.

THE Editors of the North American Review have received the following letter from the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance of the Navy Department:—

“BUREAU OF ORDNANCE, NAVY DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON CITY, 26th May, 1864.

“GENTLEMEN:—In the article on the Navy of the United States, published in the April number of the North American Review, I find (page 468) the following statement: ‘It appears from the evidence of the present Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance of the Navy Department, that at the Norfolk Yard there were seven hundred and sixty-eight guns, according to the returns made to the Ordnance Bureau. In the Report of the Senate Committee appointed to inquire into the circumstances attending the surrender of this station, it is said that other evidence goes to show quite conclusively that there were in the Yard, at the time of the evacuation, at least two thousand pieces of heavy ordnance, of which about three hundred were new Dahlgren guns.’

“The statement given at page 6 of my Report* (herewith enclosed) was carefully made up from the records of the Bureau, and it shows that the total number of guns of all calibres belonging to the Navy in March, 1861, was 2966. Now of this number 768 were in the Norfolk Yard when it was evacuated, and I so stated [as appears from the above extract] in my evidence before the Committee. This statement of mine was corroborated by the Rebel reports of the ordnance and other property found by them when they occupied the Norfolk Navy Yard.

“I desire to call attention to this fact, merely as a matter of historical record; for if there were 2000 guns in the Navy Yard at that time, it would only leave 411 to be divided among the other six yards, because there were, according to official reports, 555 guns afloat on board ship. Again, in March, 1861, the total number of heavy Dahlgren guns on hand was only 356; and if 300 of these were lost at Norfolk, whence did the Navy obtain the Dahlgren guns which at that time composed the batteries of the Minnesota, Colorado, Wabash, Roanoke, Niagara, Cumberland, and Powhatan,—in all, 212 guns of that model,—besides others that were mounted in the Mississippi, North Carolina, &c., and parked in the other Navy Yards?

“I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

“H. A. WISE,
“Chief of Bureau ad interim.

“Editors of North American Review, Boston, Mass.”

[The conclusion of the Senate Committee, the correctness of which Captain Wise denies, is to be found on page 2, Senate Rep. Com., No. 37, 37th Congress, 2d Session.]

* Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, October 20, 1863.